

March 5, 2015

To the members of the Labor Committee:

My name is Hannah Milliken, and I am a barista and former server from New Haven. I hope this committee will pass this bill to eliminate the tipped sub-minimum wage for servers and bartenders.

Minimum wage is not enough to increase one's sustainability with the hopes of creating a better quality of life, especially when you're only guaranteed two-thirds of the regular minimum wage as a server or bartender. Common roadblocks like medical issues, student loans, or even car troubles force minimum wage workers to live paycheck to paycheck with little hope of ever creating a savings. Society also creates an environment where customers and consumers are unaware of how tip wages and tip culture affect service industry workers. People often don't tip enough, don't know the difference between tipping at a bar versus a table at the same establishment, the varying degrees of being tipped out, or tips being included in paychecks. If we pass legislation that prioritizes the deserved wages of service industry workers it will not only hold politicians accountable for understanding our current system, but also hold consumers accountable for realizing how flawed our system truly is.

As a server, and with tip wages so low, it's easy for business owners to pay their employees under the table and off the books. At a previous waitress job, the management frequently would not include all our tips when we got paid out, and would take employees off the books and pay them under the table with the lies that we would be "making more" when in fact the opposite was the reality. Far too often have I seen bosses withhold tips, practice dishonesty with their payroll, and take advantage of tip salaries in order to pay their employees the least amount of money as possible. This happens at multiple dining establishments in New Haven and all over the United States. If tip credits were eliminated, there would be less room for business owners to take advantage of the people working for them. It is time for entrepreneurs and customers alike to start treating those working in the service industry with the respect we deserve.

**I urge you to pass 858**, an act concerning employees who customarily and regularly receive gratuities and the minimum fair wage.

Hannah Milliken  
New Haven